

COMFORT FOR TRIED BELIEVERS

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*“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man:
but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able;
but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”*
1 Corinthians 10:13

THIS verse immediately follows the warning to “him that thinketh he stands” to “take heed lest he fall.” We none of us know what stuff we are really made of until we are tried and tested. It is a very easy thing to imagine yourself to be strong, but it is a very different matter to find that you have sufficient strength when you actually need it. It has even been found possible in these modern days, for some brethren and sisters to believe themselves to be perfect—to believe that sin is entirely conquered within them, but I will warrant you that you will find that the practice of perfection is not nearly so common as the profession of it, and nothing like so easy.

And I will venture to go even further, and to say that if you watch those in whom sin is said to be dead, you will find that if it is dead, it is not buried, and that it smells remarkably like other dead things, which ought to be buried. It is, possibly, worse than when it was alive, for it has become alive again, in an even worse sense, with a double putridity.

Let no one of us imagine himself to be perfect, or to be proof against the temptations of Satan, or even the grosser vices to which the flesh is prone. It may only need for you to be attacked at a certain point, and in a certain way, and you will be overcome even as others have been. Your wisest way is to believe yourself neither to be wise nor strong, and therefore to lie humbly at His feet who can make you both wise and strong, and to look away from yourself, up to Him who will keep the feet of His saints.

It ought to cool the hot blood of self-conceit, in any man, to remind him that, although he thinks that he stands, it is simply because he has not been tempted as others have been, who have fallen, or if he has been tempted in a way which overthrew them, while he has stood fast, yet if the temptations were still further increased, and he were left to himself, he would find that at the last, the fierce wind from the pit would sweep him off his feet even as it has swept off other men, who thought that *they* could never be moved.

After the apostle Paul had, by this warning, rebuked the boastings of these who thought they were standing securely, he thought of the far larger number of persons who never think that they can stand, but who are in constant terror lest they should fall. They say they are not the people of God, yet in almost the next breath, they say they are afraid that they will lose what they just said they had not got! They sometimes hope that they are saved, yet they quickly doubt if it is so with them, and they are troubled with the fear that even though they are saved, they may yet fall and perish.

Their feelings are a strange mingle-mangle of incorrect caution and incorrect doubt, and Paul seems to me, in this verse, to give them a cordial by which their fainting spirits may be revived, and I would like to pass it on to any of you who also need it. You may be tried in two senses—trial will come, and the trial will often be a temptation, while the temptation will always be a trial

I. Now comes in the comfort, and the first comfort, even in great trouble, is, that WE HAVE NOT, AFTER ALL, BEEN TRIED IN ANY VERY UNUSUAL WAY, “There hath no temptation (or trial) taken you but such as is common to man.”

You may think, my dear brethren and sisters, that you have been tried more than others, but it is only your want of knowledge of the trials of others which leads you to imagine that your own are unique. There are many others, besides yourself in the furnace, and in quite as hot a part of it as that in which you are now placed. Note what Paul says, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man." It is a human temptation, not a superhuman one, which has assailed you, that is to say, one which can be withstood by men—not one that must inevitably sweep them away.

You have never been tempted with an angelic temptation. Satan has tempted you, young man, but not with the same temptation with which he allured the angels who kept not their first estate. There may be other orders of intelligence, for which there are other forms of temptation, because their intellects are superior to yours, but God has allowed you to be assailed in a way which is suitable as a test to you as a man. The trials that have come upon you have been moderated to your capacity as a man.

The Lord knows that you are but animated dust, so He has not permitted you to be treated as if you were made of steel or iron. He has Himself dealt with you as an earthen vessel—a thing of clay in which He has caused life to dwell. He has not broken you with His rod of iron, as He would have done if He had struck you with it.

"But I am very sorely tempted," says one. Yes, perhaps you are, but the Lord has given you the history of the children of Israel in the wilderness, to let you see that you have not been tempted more than they were. "Ah!" says another, "but I find myself placed in a very peculiar position, where I am greatly tried. I have to labor hard, and I have much difficulty in earning my daily bread, and I am beset with trials of many kinds."

Well, dear friend, even though what you say is perfectly true, I am not certain that your position is any more likely to bring temptation than was that of the children of Israel in the wilderness. "Ah!" you say, "but they had not to work to earn their bread. The manna came to them every morning, and they had only to gather it, and to eat it. They were not engaged in commercial transactions, there were no markets in the desert—no Corn Exchange, no Stock Exchange, no Smithfield, no Billingsgate—no taking down the shutters in the morning, and putting them up again at night, and going a great part of the day without any customers. They were separated from all other nations, and were in a peculiarly advantageous position."

Yet, dear friends, you need not wish to be placed in such a position, because advantageous as it was in some respects, the Israelites there were evidently tempted to all sorts of sins, and fell into them very grievously. Having often read the story of their forty years' sojourn in the wilderness, you know their sad history. With so favorable a position granted to them, under the Lord's own special guardianship, and enriched with many choice mercies, we might have expected that they would have been free from temptation—or at any rate, that they would not have fallen into its snare, yet it was not so, for the devil can tempt in the wilderness quite as well as in the city, as we know from the experience of Christ Himself.

The devil would tempt you even if your bread was given to you every morning, instead of your having to earn it, he would tempt you if you had no business to attend to, and never had to go into the world to meet with your fellow men. In fact, the story of the Israelites teaches me that it is best for you to work, and best for you to be poor, and best for you not to make money as fast as you would like, and best for you to be surrounded by cares of various kinds. I think I judge rightly that the people of God, the saved ones, do not fall into such gross sins as the Israelites did in the wilderness, so that the saints' position, though it may appear worse than that of Israel, is really better.

To what, my dear brethren and sisters, are you tempted? *Are you tempted to lust after evil things?* They lusted after the meat that was not suitable to the climate, nor good for their health, and they despised the manna, which was the very best food they could have. Do you ever get a craving for what you ought not to desire? Are you growing covetous? Do you long for ease? Do you wish for wealth? Do you love pleasure? Well, dear friends, this temptation has happened to others before, it happened to those people in the wilderness. You are not the first to be tempted in that fashion, and if divine grace has

helped others to overcome the covetous desire, and the lusting of the spirit, it can help you to do the same, but mark also, that if others have fallen through such temptations, and perished in the wilderness, you too, apart from divine grace, will do the same. Therefore have you urgent need to cry to the Strong for strength, lest you also should fall even as they did.

Are you tempted to idolatry? It is a very common temptation to make an idol of a child, or of some particular pursuit in which you are engaged, is there anything in the world that is so dear to you that the very thought of losing it makes you feel that you would rebel against God if He took it away from you? Remember what John was inspired to write, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”

But if you are tempted to idolatry, do not forget that this is a thing that is common to men. In the wilderness the Israelites were tempted to set up a golden calf, and to worship it, and even to practice other idolatrous rites which were too foul for me to describe. They were tempted to idolatry, so it is not an uncommon temptation, and if you are also tempted in a similar fashion, you must cry to God for grace to resist and to overcome the temptation.

Are you tried sometimes, even with that terrible temptation which is mentioned in the verse where Paul says, “*Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed*”? Has strong passion sometimes suggested to you that which your soul abhors? Have you been at times forced to the very brink of that dread abyss of uncleanness, till you have had to cry, with the psalmist, “My feet were almost gone; my steps had well-nigh slipped”? Ah! This temptation also is not uncommon to men, and even those who live nearest to God, and are the most pure in heart, sometimes have to blush before the Lord that such evil suggestions should ever come into their minds.

And have you too, been *tempted “to tempt Christ*, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents”? They wanted God to change His plans and purposes concerning them, and they found fault with Him, and said that He had brought them into the wilderness to destroy them. Do you feel that your present troubles are too severe—that they should not have been sent to you—at least not so many and as heavy as they are? If so, and if you feel that you have a cause for complaint against the Most High and that you want Him to change His methods of dealing with you so as to suit your whims and fancies—alas! sad as such a state of mind is, it is only too “common to man.”

And possibly, you may also have been *tempted to murmur*, “as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.” I must withdraw that word “possibly,” for I am greatly afraid that many professing Christians do murmur, and that they do not always realize what a gross sin it is to murmur, seeing that it is an act of distinct rebellion against God. But should you at any time feel a murmuring spirit rising up within your heart, you must not say, “This is a trial which nobody else has ever experienced.” Alas! It is a very human temptation, which is exceedingly “common to man.”

So, summing up all that I have been saying, and looking around this congregation, and upon all of you who know the Lord—although it would be impossible for me to recount all the different forms of temptation and trial through which you have gone, yet this is a matter of fact—“there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.”

We are all in the same boat, brothers and sisters, so far as temptation and trial are concerned. We are all warring the same warfare, your duty may call you to one part of the field, and mine may call me to another part, but the bullets whiz by me as well as by you. There is no nook so quiet but it has its own special dangers, and there is no Valley of Humiliation so lowly but it has its peculiar temptations.

Sins are everywhere, they sit down with you at your board, and they go with you to your bed. Snares are set for you in your home and in the street—in your business and in your recreations. Snares are not absent from your pains, and they are abundant in your pleasures. Everywhere, and under all circumstances, must we expect to be tried, this experience is common to men. The remembrance that it is so ought to be somewhat of a comfort to us in every time of trial and temptation.

II. But secondly, in our text we have a far better source of comfort than that, it is this, “**BUT GOD IS FAITHFUL.**”

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able.”

“God is faithful.” Oh, how I love those words! They sound in my heart like heavenly music. “GOD is faithful.” You are not faithful, my brother or sister, at least, I know I am not, in the full sense of the term, faithful—full of faith and faithful. “But”—oh, that blessed “*but*”—“*but* GOD is faithful”! “If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful”—always true to every promise He has made—always gracious to every child whom He has adopted into His family—“a very present help in trouble”—preserving us from sinking in our seas of trouble, and delivering us from the trouble when it has accomplished the purpose for which it was sent.

“God is faithful”—faithful to that first promise of His which came into your soul when you did yield yourself to Jesus, and He whispered to your heart, “I will never leave you thee, nor forsake thee.” Do you remember that promise, and has not the Lord been faithful to it? “God is faithful” also to that promise which He made of old concerning His Son, Jesus Christ, “He shall see his seed.” He has seen His seed in you, and He will see you to be His seed for evermore.

“God is faithful” to all His promises, and in your experience, my brother or sister, He has been faithful to the promises which met your case in all your changing circumstances. Has He not been faithful? Can you put your finger upon a single page of your diary, and say, “God was unfaithful then”?

Your friend, who ate bread with you, has lifted up his heel against you, but has your God forsaken you? Even your own children have been unkind and ungrateful to you, but has the Lord ever treated you ill? Where you had the most hope, among your earthly friends and acquaintances, you have had the most disappointments, but has Jesus ever been a wilderness to you? “All men are liars,” you have said, in the bitterness of your spirit, when you have trusted in them, and they have failed you in the time of trial, but have you ever found Christ false to His Word? Can you not join your testimony with that of all the saints above, and the saints below, and say with Paul, “God is faithful”?

Even if any of you are looking forward to a dreaded sickness, or to a painful operation, or to business losses which may sink you from your present comfortable position to one of great trial and poverty—think of this blessed truth, “God is faithful.” The whole world may reel to and fro, like a drunken man, but the Rock of Ages stands secure. The shooting stars of temporary prosperity may die out in everlasting night, but God is “the Father of lights, with who is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

“God is faithful.” Whatever your future trials are to be, put you this short sweet sentence into your mouth, and keep it there, as a heavenly lozenge which shall sustain you at all times. Make it also into a jubilant refrain, and as you go on your way, sing, again and again, “God is faithful.” Trials and temptations will assail you, “but God is faithful.” Friends will fail and forsake you, “but God is faithful.” Health may be lost, and property may vanish, “but God is faithful.” What do you want more than this, soldiers of Christ? Here you have breastplate, helmet, sword, shield, spear—yea, the whole panoply of God.

III. The third comfort for a tried and tempted believer arises from GOD’S POWER, for Paul says, “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.”

God, then, has power to limit temptation, it is clear, from the Book of Job, that Satan could not tempt or try the patriarch except by divine permission, and even then, his power was limited, nor can he tempt us unless God allows him to do so. Although the devil had great power over the elements, so that he brought disaster upon poor Job, yet there was a very definite limit to his chain, even when the Lord let him loose to a certain extent, and when God set up his barriers, Satan could not go beyond them.

You remember that the Lord first said to Satan, concerning His servant Job, “Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand.” When the devil again intruded himself among the sons of God, the Lord let out more links of his chain, but there was still a most emphatic limit to his power over the patriarch, “Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.” The devil would have

liked to kill Job outright, but he could go no further than the Lord allowed him to go, and God still has unlimited power over the devil and over every form of temptation or trial that can ever come upon you.

If the Lord appoints for you ten troubles, He will not suffer them to be increased to eleven. If He ordains that you shall be in trouble for six years, you will not be in it for six years and a day, but when the allotted time has expired, you shall come out of it. Nothing can resist the might of the omnipotent JEHOVAH, “who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind.” He can put a bit in the mouth of the tempest, and rein in the rushing steeds of the storm, and the fiercest of your trials and temptations must feel the force of His overruling and restraining hand.

When you are on the dunghill, recollect that God is on His throne. Well did the psalmist sing, “The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice,” but much more may His own people rejoice because His sovereignty is pledged to defend them. Why, if all the armies of the devil were let loose upon a single saint, who felt himself to be weak as a worm, and the Lord said to them, “I am his defense, and you shall not touch him,” they could not touch him, and he would be able to say, with the utmost confidence, “Greater is he that is for me than all that can be against me.”

The adversaries of the righteous may rage as much as they will, but they will have to spend their strength in raging, for that is all they can do against God’s people without His express permission. Not a hair of their head can be scorched by the fires of persecution unless the Lord allows it. The waters of the Red Sea cannot drown them, they march between the watery walls dry shod. The lions cannot devour them, Daniel enjoyed a good night’s rest even in the lions’ den. Even the waves of the sea become the servitors of the saints, for “Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights,” in preparation for future service for God.

All His people are kept by His almighty power. How greatly this ought to comfort you who are sorely tried! Every twig of the rod of correction has been made by God, and every stroke of it is counted by Him. There is not a drop more gall in your cup than the Lord has ordained. He has weighed, in the scales of the sanctuary, every ingredient of your medicine, and mixed it with all His infallible skill so that it may produce the cure of all your ills, should not this make you rejoice in the Lord all the day long, and in the night seasons as well?

IV. Fourthly, not only should tried believers rejoice in God’s power, but they should also rejoice in GOD’S JUDGMENT, for Paul says, “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.”

Who beside God knows how much we are able to bear? Our consolation arises from the fact that God knows exactly how much we *can* bear. We have no idea, ourselves, what we can bear. I have many a time, heard a person say, “If such and such a thing were to happen, I should break my heart, and die.” Well, that very thing has happened, but the person concerned did not break his heart, and he did not die. On the contrary, he behaved himself as a Christian in a trial should, God helped him wondrously, and he played the man, and became more than conqueror, and was the brighter and the braver, ever afterwards, for all the affliction through which he had passed.

Brother, your own strength, in some respects, is greater than you think, and in other respects, it is less than you think, but God knows just how much you can bear, so leave yourself in His hands.

I have known some people who have wished for trouble, it is a great pity that anybody should be as foolish as that. I remember one, who used to think that he was not a child of God because he had not had much trouble. He used to be fretting all the day long because he had nothing really to make him fret. I once heard a woman in the street say to her child, who was screaming lustily, “If you cry for nothing, I’ll give you something to cry for.”

So, when a man wants trouble, he will probably get it, but it is a very silly child or man who asks for the rod. Be content to have as little of it as you really must, you will have quite enough of it before you get to heaven. Do not ask for it, you will have it in due time. God knows to an ounce just what His children and His servants can carry, and He never overloads them. It is true that He sometimes sends

them more trouble than they could have carried by themselves, but then, as He increases the weight of their burden, He also increases the strength of the back upon which He places it.

I have often admired the lovingkindness of the Lord to many of my own flock here, and have noted the great joy that our young Christians have had for a number of years, and observed how remarkably God has preserved them from temptation without and from trials within. The Lord does not send His young children out to battle. He does not intend such little boats as these to go far out to sea. He will not overdrive these lambs.

Yet the advanced Christians are just as happy as the young people are, and they are stronger and more fit for stern service, and more able to sympathize with others, who are in trouble, because of what they have themselves passed through. As they have grown stronger, God has given them more fighting to do for Him, while the raw recruits have been kept at home to be drilled and disciplined. You know that when there is a desperate fight being waged, and the issue of the battle seems in doubt, the commander orders “the old guard” to the front. That is part of the privilege of being an old guardsman—to go into the hottest place on the field of battle, and it is one of the privileges of the advanced children of God to be tempted more than others, and to suffer more than others.

If I could have any trial or temptation, which otherwise, would fall upon a young brother, who has only known the Lord a week or two, I would gladly say, “Let me have it.” It might stagger him, and I should be sorry for him to be staggered by it, so I will willingly endure it. You tried believers must not imagine that God does not love you as much as He did in the days of your spiritual youth, when He did not test you as He does now. He loves you quite as much as He did then, and He trusts you even more than He did then, because He has made you stronger than you used to be, He gives you the honor and privilege of marching with the vanguard of His army, or leading the forlorn hope, or standing foot to foot with old Apollyon.

God knows exactly how much temptation or trial you can bear, and He will not suffer the trial to go beyond that point. But mark you, it will go right up to that point, for there is no such thing in the world as faith that runs to waste. For every grain of faith that God gives, He usually gives the equivalent trial of some sort or other, for if faith could ever be in excess, it would degenerate into fanaticism, or some other unholy thing. If the Lord supplies us, at our back door as it were, with His good treasure, we are to dispose of it in our front shop in our holy trading for Him.

V. Fifthly, our text seems to intimate that GOD HATH IN STORE SOMETHING TO GO WITH OUR TEMPTATIONS, “He will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

You know how you treat your own child. There is a dose of nasty physic to be taken, and the little one does not like it. The very sight of the spoon and cup makes it feel queer. But mother says, “Now, Johnny, take this medicine, and then you shall have this lump of sugar, or this fruit, to take away the taste of it.” And when God sends a trial or trouble to one of His children, He is sure to have a choice sweetmeat to go with it.

I have heard a child say, “I do not mind taking the physic so long as I get the sugar,” and I have known some of the Lord’s people say, “We will willingly bear sickness, pain, bereavement, temptation, and persecution, if we may but have our Savior’s presence in it all.” Some of us will never forget our experiences in sickness, when our pain has been sharpest and worst, it has also been sweetest and best, at the same time.

What do I not personally owe to the file, and the anvil, and the hammer in my Master’s workshop? I have often said, and I say again, that the best piece of furniture in my house is the cross of affliction. I have long ago learned to prize it, and to praise God for it, and for that which has come to me with it, for I have often found that with the trial, the Lord has made a way of escape, and that I have been able to bear it.

Even with the temptation to sin, the Lord often sends to the tempted soul, such a revelation of the sinfulness of sin, and of the beauty of holiness, that the poison of the temptation is quite neutralized.

Even with temporal trials, the Lord often gives temporal mercies, sometimes when He has been pleased to take away a man's wealth, He has restored to Him His health, and so the man has been a distinct gainer. I have known several instances in which that has occurred. And when one dear child has been taken away out of a family, there has, perhaps, been the conversion of another of the children, which has been a wonderful compensation for the trial.

And oftentimes, trouble has been attended with an unusual delight in the Lord. The Word of God has been peculiarly sweet at such a time, and the minister has seemed to preach better than ever he did before, his message exactly fitting your condition just then. You have been surprised to find that the bitterness which came with the trouble, has passed away almost before you were aware of it, and as death is swallowed up in victory, like one bitter drop in a glass of water, so your trouble has been diluted with sweet wine, and you have swallowed it, and have scarcely tasted its bitterness.

Thus the Lord, by His grace, and presence, and comfort, has made you so glad that you have hardly known that you have been in such trouble, because of the super-abounding mercy which came with it. Ought not that to comfort us, and to make us ready for whatever the Lord pleases to send to us, or to permit to come upon us?

VI. Now notice, in the last place, that GOD MAKES A WAY OF ESCAPE FOR HIS PEOPLE, "He will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

I will read that over again, "He will with the temptation also make a way to escape"—"that you may get out of it?" Oh, no!—"That you may not have to endure it?" Oh, no!—"That ye may be able to bear it." That is a curious way to escape, is it not? Here is your way of retreat blocked up, and the opposing army is in front of you, yet you are to escape. You say to the Lord, "Which way am I to run?" But the Lord replies, "You must not run away, your way to escape is to cut a road right through your adversaries."

That is a singular way to escape, but it is the most glorious way in the whole world. The best way for an army to escape is by conquering its foe. It is not the best way for the pilgrim to go, to the right, into the dark mountains, or to the left, into the thick forest, to escape from his enemies, the best way for him to escape is to go straight forward, despite all his adversaries, and that is the only right way for you to escape.

Now, beloved brother or sister, you may, at this moment, be expecting some very heavy affliction, and you have been asking the Lord to make a way of escape for you. You have said, "Oh, that I might not have to come to that hour of trial!" But you will have to come to it. "But cannot that dear one's life be spared?" I hope it may, but it is possible that it may not. "Then how am I to have a way of escape?" Your way of escape is not to avoid the trial, but to be able to bear it.

What a mercy it is that God, though He will not let His people escape trial, will really let them escape, for this is a way of escape for them, and the best way of escape too. It is a way of escape from all the sin of the temptation, and from all the evil of the trial, you must have the trial, but you will only have the beneficial part of it.

Brother, you must be plunged into that sea of sorrow, but it will not drown you, it will only wash and cleanse you. Sister, you must go into that fire, your Lord has so ordained it, yet you are going to escape the fire. Do you ask, "How can that be?" Why, thus—none of your gold shall be destroyed, only the dross shall be consumed, and you shall be all the purer for passing through the fire, so again I say that this is the very best way to escape, for if we could escape in any other way, we would lose all the benefit of the trial.

What shall I say then in closing, but this, brethren and sisters? Are you troubled just now, and are you inclined to despair? Take wiser counsel, the storms that are beating about your barque are only such as beat about your Master's vessel, and the ships and boats in which His apostles sailed across the sea of old. These storms are not supernatural, they are not beyond what believers in Jesus are able to bear. Put your vessel's head to the wind, like a brave sailor, do not try to avoid that fierce blast. Sail in its very teeth, for there is a power within you which can overcome all the winds and the waves, for is not the

Lord Himself with you as your Captain, and is not the Holy Ghost with you as your Pilot, and have you not a faithful God to trust to in the stormiest night you will ever know? True, your foes are many and mighty, but face them like a man. Have no thought of turning back, and flinging away your shield, but resolve in the mighty power of faith, that since the Lord has said that, “as thy days, so shall thy strength be,” to the end you shall endure, and that, with Job, you will say, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” It will not be easy to keep that resolve, yet the Lord deserves that we should keep it.

Think of yourself, beloved brother, in the worst conceivable condition, and then know that there is no sufficient reason, even in such a condition as that, for you to doubt your God. Suppose yourself brought to your last penny, yet remember that there was a time when you were not worth a penny, a time when you could not put food into your own mouth, and could not put on your own garments. You were cast upon God in your first childhood, and He took care of you then, and if you grow to be a child again, and the infirmities of age increase and multiply, He who was so good at the beginning, will be quite as good at the end.

Remember His ancient promise, “Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.” Such a promise as this, if God the Holy Spirit will bless it, will make the most tried believer rejoice in the Lord, and go on his way defying every foe who may be in his path.

What I cannot understand is, what people do who have not a God to trust to. I often go to see poor sick people, full of aches and pains, and it charms me to hear them talk of the goodness of the Lord to them. In talking this week with one of our brethren, who is very sick and ill, he spoke with such holy joy and boasting of the Lord’s goodness to him, that I could not help saying that it would take a great many infidel arguments to make me doubt the power of true religion after I had listened to him.

I like to see God’s tried people dying full of joy, praising and blessing the name of the Lord who is their All in all in their most trying hour. It is not so with all of you, then what do you do when trial comes, without a God to help you? You have not much of this world’s goods, and you have to work hard, yet when you die, you have not a home to go to, you have no hope of going to heaven. Oh, you poor No-hopes! “Oh!” says one, “we are not all poor, some of us are quite well-to-do.” But you are poor for all that, even if you have all your heart can wish for here. If you have not a God, where do you carry your troubles and your griefs, for I am sure that you have some?

O my dear friend, may the Lord make you feel that you cannot do without Him! And when your heart has come to this resolve, “I cannot do without my God, I will not try to do without Him, I feel that I must have Him,” then you shall have Him. He waits to be gracious, and He has said, “They that seek me early shall find me.” May you seek Him now, and find Him, and to Him shall be the praise forever and ever! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-13

Verses 1-4. *Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of the spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.*

You see, then, dear brethren, that the possession of privileges is not everything. Paul would not have us to be ignorant that all those, who were with Moses in the wilderness, had privileges of a very high order. Did they not all pass through the Red Sea, and so escape from their powerful and cruel foes? Did they not all drink of water which gushed forth from the flinty rock? Were they not all fed with manna from heaven? Yet their privileges did not save them, for while they had the five privileges mentioned in these four verses, they fell into the five great sins of which we are about to read, and so, their privileges, instead of being a blessing to them, only increased their condemnation.

5-6. *But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples,—*

Or warnings, for just as they were overthrown in the wilderness, so may we be, notwithstanding all the Gospel privileges which we enjoy, if we are not true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. If the life of Christ is not in our souls, all the privileges of the church of God cannot save us. “These things were our examples,”—

6-11. *To the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples;*

The apostle has told us that before, but he tells it to us again, to warn us, by these beacons, lest we come to a similar destruction to that which befell those ancient unbelievers.

11-12. *And they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*

We also are to take heed lest we fall, especially those of us who think we are standing securely. You have seen how terrible was the fate of those unbelievers in the wilderness, who never entered into Canaan, but left their carcasses in the desert, now Paul urges us, with such beacons to warn us, to take heed lest we also fall as they did.

13. *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

O Lord, fulfill Thy gracious purpose unto Thy servants! Hold Thou us up, lest we fall. We are very weak, keep us, for Thy dear Son’s sake! Amen.

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